

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 121158Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7109

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 8424

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM BYROADE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PK, US, MASS

SUBJECT: DESTROYER SALE TO PAKISTAN

1. YOU WILL RECALL THAT DURING THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH BHUTTO, THE LATTER RAISED THE QUESTION OF AVAILABILITY OF ASROC FOR THE GEARING DESTROYERS PAKISTAN WILL BUY FROM US. SECRETARY PROMISED TO LOOK INTO THIS AND INFORM BHUTTO OF RESULTS.

2. PAKISTAN NAVY PLACES HIGH PRIORITY ON OBTAINING ASROC FOR ITS GEARINGS. CONSIDERING SMALL SIZE OF FLEET AND ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE NATURE OF ITS MISSION, ASROC WOULD GIVE IT MUCH GREATER CAPABILITY AT LIMITED COST. FACT THAT THIS WAS ONLY MILITARY SUPPLY ISSUE RAISED BY BHUTTO WITH SECRETARY (EXCEPT FOR DISCUSSION ON A-7S) INDICATES IMPORTANCE PM ATTACHES TO ITS INCLUSION IN GEARING SALE.

3. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING WE PROBABLY WOULD NOT HAVE ANY MAJOR DISCLOSURE PROBLEM IN SELLING ASROC TO THE PAKS. WE HAVE SOLD IT TO THE NATO COUNTRIES, IRAN AND JAPAN AND THE TECHNOLOGY IS NOT OVERLY SENSITIVE. ALSO, SALE OF ASROC WOULD NOT CONTRAVENE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED WHEN EMBARGO WAS LIFTED. I UNDERSTAND MAJOR PROBLEM IS ONE OF AVAILABILITY.

4. DEPARTMENT HAS TOLD US US NAVY HAS STOPPED PRODUCTION OF ASROC
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AND HAS NO PLANS TO REOPEN PRODUCTION LINE. AS NAVY DECOMMISSIONS

SHIPS WHICH HAVE ASROC INSTALLED - INCLUDING THE ONES EARMARKED FOR PAKISTAN-ASROC IS REMOVED AND TRANSFERRED TO OTHER SHIPS. THEREFORE, US NAVY IS HESITANT TO AGREE TO SELL ASROC SINCE IT WOULD MEAN DECREASING NUMBERS AVAILABLE TO US NAVY ITSELF.

5. I BELIEVE THAT SINCE BHUTTO IS ASKING TO PURCHASE ASROC FOR ONLY TWO DESTROYERS AND HAS EXPRESSED HIS OWN DEEP INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT, THAT WE SHOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN MEETING HIS CONCERN. I CONSEQUENTLY RECOMMEND THE DEPARTMENT WORK WITH THE NAVY TO SEE IF TWO ASROC SYSTEMS COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO PN. (FOR EXAMPLE, THERE MAY BE TRAINING UNITS WHICH COULD BE SOLD WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL DEGRADING OF USN CAPABILITIES.) I GREATLY APPRECIATE EFFORTS DEPARTMENT HAS MADE TO STEER THE THE GEARING SALE THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY AND ON TO THE HILL AND IT HAS HAD DRAMATIC AND POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS WITH PAK NAVY. IF WE WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE PACKAGE BY MAKING ASROC AVAILABLE AS WELL, THE BENEFITS WE WOULD GAIN IN TERMS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PAK MILITARY AND IN BEING RESPONSIVE TO A REQUEST FROM THE PM WOULD BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL AT THIS STAGE OF US/PAK RELATIONS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY SALES, DESTROYERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ISLAMA08424
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760310-1295
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760861/aaaacbda.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DESTROYER SALE TO PAKISTAN
TAGS: MASS, PK, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006